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ABSTRACT

With an emphasis on social and teen issues, the objectives for this project for students in grades 7-12 are for students: (1) to "meet" and learn from students who live in another country; (2) to be able to understand similarities and differences between themselves and their keypals (named so because a keyboard is used instead of a pen); (3) to be encouraged to develop a desire to travel and learn about the world and its people; and (4) to learn to use telecommunications and understand the advantages of using e-mail. A project which linked schools in the United States and Moscow, Russia is used as the example. In 13 lessons, students are introduced to the targeted foreign country; taught basic word processing and telecommunications terms and skills; given the opportunity to share and discuss information learned from repeated communication with keypals; instructed to prepare posters representing keypal's personality, daily life, and country; and asked to evaluate Project Linking. Included are suggested questions to ask a keypal, a glossary of telecommunications terms, guidelines for effective electronic communication, and a list of participating schools. (MAS)

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PROJECT LINKING:

The Russia--US Connection

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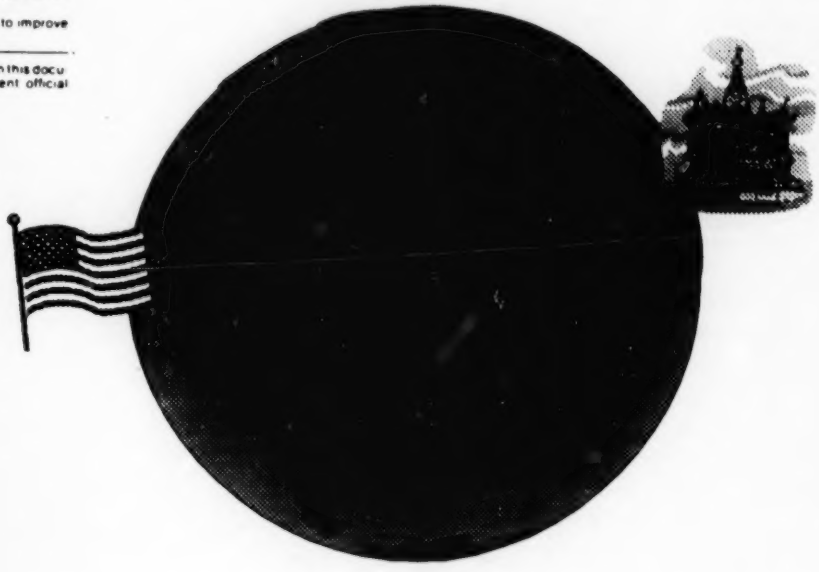

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Project Linking

A Fulbright-Hayes Project

Detective Portfolio: Who Is My Keypal?

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Project Linking

Detective Portfolio: Who Is My Keypal?

Key Concept: Social Issues

Unit Concept: Teen Issues

Subject Areas: English, History, Sociology, World Geography, World Cultures, Computer Applications

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Project Goal: *To develop an understanding of each other as citizens of the world.*

Project Objectives:

1. Students will "meet" and learn from students who another country.
2. Students will be able to understand similarities and differences between themselves and their keypals.
3. Students will be encouraged to develop a desire to travel and learn about the world and its people.
4. Students will learn to use telecommunications and understand the advantages of using e-mail as a means of communication.

Project Length: Approximately 13 days to one month. Teacher may eliminate topics easily to shortened project length.

The following project uses a United States' school and a Moscow, Russia school for the example. However, any two nations could be used. All examples, worksheets, and forms may be reproduced by educational institutions.

Lesson 1

Objective: Students will be given an overall introduction to Project Linking.

Items needed: cultural items from other nation, tape player, tape with music from other country, world map, string

1. Room should be decorated with items from other country. Table in front of the classroom should have several items displayed so students can view as they enter the room. If possible, have a bulletin board with pictures, posters, examples of currency, etc. prepared.

2. Tape of music from other country should be playing as students enter room.

3. On the blackboard should be written:

Project Linking

4. Teacher should hold up, explain, and pass around several items from the foreign country.

5. Respective nations should be shown on world map.
   A. Show pictures from other country
   B. Pin the string on the map, connecting the two respective sites (i.e. Burleson, Texas and Moscow, Russia)
   C. Discussion about the distance between the two countries.

6. Spend the rest of the class hour brainstorming students' perceptions, stereotypes of the other country.
   A. Write ideas on the board
   B. Discuss each idea and help the students understand where these perceptions originated

Lesson 2

Objective: Students will understand various goals of project and the relevance of their learning and participation in it.

Items needed: mailbox, envelopes, and a plastic crate or box in which student files will be kept, student file and a completed grading sheet (see example at the end of this packet) to be shown as examples, copies of grading sheet for students

1. Introduce Project Linking
   A. Show mailbox with "electronic mail" (e-mail) address of your school on outside.
      1. Teacher enthusiastically explains how everyone loves to receive mail
      2. explain how students will exchange letters with the foreign country
      3. from inside mailbox, pull out envelopes with the name of the foreign country on them addressed to specific students in that particular class

2. Instead of using postal mail, students will be using "electronic mail" on the computer.
   A. Students will prepare letter(s) on computers using word processing.
   B. Using electronic mail, students will "upload" their letters to their foreign keypals.
   C. Length of time of delivery of letters varies
      1. depends on where it is going
      2. efficiency of equipment

3. Explanation of project goals and their importance to the students.
   A. Students can "meet" someone from another country.
   B. Students can see similarities and/or differences between the two countries.
   C. Increase student desire to travel and learn about others.
   D. Students will learn to use e-mail.

4. Explain the Project Linking assignment
   A. Students will play "Detective" to discover data about keypal.
   B. Students will correspond with student from other nation

1. If the two student groups do not match numerically, one group may have to be grouped i.e. 3 Americans will correspond with one Russian.

D. Using a "keyboard" instead of a pen, the term "keypals" instead of "penpals" will be used

E. Students must play "detective" and gather information about "keypal"
   1. students will ask their keypal substantive questions
   2. information gathered will be kept in file, stored in a box or plastic crate
   3. at the end of the project, students will know the following about keypal:
      a. appearance
      b. daily life
      c. interests
      d. family
      e. et cetera

5. Grading

A. The following should be written on the chalkboard before grading is explained (or a handout with the following information should be distributed)

Grading
Grade Sheet
Essay
Picture
Poster

B. Students will be graded on the quality of letter sent.
   1. "What is your school like?" is too vague of a question
   2. "What time does your school begin? What classes are required to graduate? Do you have to wear uniforms to school?" are examples of specific questions.

C. Explain to students how the grading sheet will be used to determine part of their grade. (Example at end of this project)
   1. check mark will be placed to the right of each letter topic
   2. check mark under "one" is unacceptable, under "three" is average, under "five" is outstanding
   3. teacher may write comments at the bottom of the sheet

4. students who do something beyond the stated requirements of this project will receive extra credit

Examples:

-interviews a Russian and then reports to the class
-brings items, such as pictures, cassette tapes with music and/or recorded message to be sent to Russian students, small items, etc.
-make a Russian dish to share with classmates
-write to the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. for information which will be shared with the class
-Learn the Russian cyrillic alphabet (or in the case of nations such as Norway, Bulgaria, Finland the student could learn 10 key phrases)

D. Students will type a final essay at the end of the project, describing who their "keypal" is, what his/her typical day is like, what his/her family is like, etc. This essay will also include a personal evaluation by the student of what was learned from participating in this cultural exchange project.

E. Students will draw a picture, using a graphics program on computers, showing what their keypal looks like

F. Poster will be made by the student group illustrating some aspect of their keypal's life

G. Grading percentages:
1. grade sheet = 40%
2. essay = 25%
3. picture = 15%
4. poster = 20%

H. If any part of the four requirements are not completed, the student not doing his part will receiving a failing grade for this project.

Lesson 3

Objective: Students will learn the basic terms related to telecommunications and how e-mail messages are sent and received.

Items needed: tin can "telephone", computer, modem (both internal and external, if possible), computer disk, LCD overhead projector connected to the computer, overhead projector, transparencies, slips of paper in a container with telecommunications terms written on them, index cards for flash cards

1. General introduction on communications and the importance of communicating ideas from one person to another.

2. Teacher will pretend to tap out a message using Morse Code
   A. Explain that the telegraph was the first method used to communicate over long distances quickly
   B. Telegraph first widely used in the US in 1860s

3. Teacher will use two students and the tin can "telephone" to demonstrate the "old way" people instantly communicated (Or real telephones could be used)
   A. Telephone invented by Alexander Graham Bell in the US in the 1870s
      1. primary method of communicating over long distances
      2. student input about problems of communication over telephone, such as no visual contact or facial expressions.

4. The computer and a modem is a new way to communicate
   A. Students examine internal and external modems
   B. Discuss the differences between the two types
   C. Explain how telecommunications work, using transparencies and/or blackboard to help demonstrate how data is transferred from one computer to another over long distances.

5. Telecommunications terms:
   A. Students draw slips of paper with telecommunications terms written on them. (See sheet at end of this project.) In small groups, students search out (using various resources) definitions of these terms.

B. Students, in groups, teach terms to rest of the class.
C. Students make flash cards and review each other.

6. The teacher should explain briefly how electronic mail works
A. Class discuss some of the advantages of e-mail
B. Class discuss some of the disadvantages of e-mail

Lesson 4

Objective: Students will use word processor on a computer to prepare first e-mail letter to keypal.

Items needed: Computer lab, word processing software installed, data disk(s)

1. Teacher will describe cooperating school and community. (See example essays at end of project.)

2. Each individual student will write a letter using word processing software on computers. These letters need to be enthusiastic and interesting so their "keypals" will want to learn more about them.
   A. Suggestions:
      1. name and nickname
      2. gender
      3. age
      4. grade
      5. favorite subject
      6. family
      7. hobbies/interests
      8. personal "tidbits" about themselves so keypal will find them interesting

3. Have students use the "spell check" on the word processing program. Also, have them read other students' letters to get ideas for their letters and to check for clarification of meaning.

4. Student letters should be saved to disk or hard drive. Actual e-mailing process will be in next lesson.

Lesson 5

Objective: Students will learn the process for uploading messages.

Items needed: Computer lab, LCD overhead projector connected to a computer, overhead projector, student handout explaining steps in e-mail process, telecommunication terms flash cards

1. Brief review, using flash cards, of telecommunication terms.

2. Distribute student handout
   A. Explanation of e-mail process--step-by-step--with students while they are taking additional notes on the student handout.

3. Teacher demonstrates process of sending an e-mail message.
   A. Teacher will type and send a brief message to corresponding teacher following each stated step.
   B. Since this process has many steps, a student volunteer will send another brief message to corresponding teacher with the class calling out what steps to take by referring to their handout.
   C. Any confusion on the students' part should be discussed and re-taught until complete understanding is achieved.

4. Students will "call up" their letter they wrote in the previous lesson and make any needed changes.

5. Student volunteer will demonstrate the "uploading "process using overhead projector for class demonstration connected to the computer
   A. This time, the student will send his/her own letter
   B. Students should follow instruction sheet and upload each of their own letter.
   C. Peer tutors will help out any students with problems.

6. The student should print a copy of letter and place in his/her file before leaving class.

7. The teacher will need to "grade" each letter using the grading sheet as described in an earlier lesson. This grade sheet should be kept in the student folder along with the student's letters.

The first five days of this lesson should be done consecutively. However, the remaining days will be spread out over time. The teacher may wish to use the computer lab one or two days a week, using the other days to discuss letters received and work on other related material. It is recommended that two days a week, such as Monday and Thursday, be used as computer lab days. The amount of additional class time devoted to this project would be up to the individual teachers..

Lesson 6

Objective: Students will gain insight about the daily life and personality of their keypals by sharing and discussing information received from their new friends and preparing class displays representing the country.

Items needed: recent received e-mail letters, bulletin board items

1. Once letters have been received from the cooperating school, they should be printed by each student.

2. The teacher should go around the room and have students read portions of their keypal's introductory letter.
   A. Make this fun and interesting for the students by showing enthusiasm
   B. Use this time to encourage class discussions about country and cultural information.
   C. Encourage students to share their learning and and perceptions of their keypals.
   D. Using various questioning techniques, teacher should elicit observations from students about the foreign country and its people.

3. Students should get into their groups.
   A. Groups should decide what, if anything, they need to explore further about their keypal regarding the introductory letter received.
   B. Any follow-up messages should be prepared and sent.
   C. Students need to be reminded they will be graded on how well they "know" their keypal.
   D. Review the goals of this project and the grading scale.

4. Students work on a bulletin board to display various facts about the foreign country as learned from keypals.

Lesson 7

Objective: Students will write a follow-up letter to keypal, requesting additional details about the keypal's daily life and school schedule. By this time, students should demonstrate proficiency in the uploading process.

Items needed: computer lab, word processor, data disks, student e-mail process handout, chalkboard

1. Students should "brainstorm" about what questions need to be asked and what additional data is needed to develop a clearer picture of their keypals.

2. Students will type a second letter to keypals.

3. Students should include any questions as a result of the response to the introductory letters received to get a clearer picture of who their "keypal" is. Examples of these questions can be taken from the above brainstorming activity.

4. Students should also ask details questions about their keypal's school, daily schedule, school activities, etc.

5. Students should respond to any questions that their keypal has ask about them. Specific information should be given to help develop a "rapport" between students.

6. The teacher may give a few suggestions about what type of questions to ask. (See list at end of this packet.)
   - A. What classes currently taking
   - B. Favorite and/or least favorite class
   - C. Types of lunch at school and length of time for lunch
   - D. Discipline policy of school (i.e. what type of punishment for what type of offense?)
   - E. Teachers
   - F. What classes are required to graduate
   - G. Anything regarding school

7. Students should help each other send e-mail. If time is short, student should save his/her letter and upload it later.

8. Letters must be printed and placed in student folder by student before leaving class. Keeping folder complete and up-to-date is the responsibility of the student

Lesson 8

Objective: Students increase learning about keypal and develop further areas of exchange of information.

Items needed: recent e-mail received from keypals

1. Once letters have been received from the cooperating school, the teacher should encourage students to share portions of their keypal's messages with their peers.
   A. Make this fun and interesting for the students by showing enthusiasm
   B. Using questioning techniques, draw students into discussion regarding the similarities and differences between keypals and themselves.
   C. Letter should be placed in student folder.

2. Students should get into their groups.
   A. Groups should decide what, if anything, they need to explore further about their keypal regarding the letter just received
   B. Student should be encourage to be creative and resourceful in striving to develop a well-rounded picture of their keypal.
   C. Students need to be reminded they will be graded on how well they "know" their keypal

3. Students should also begin to discuss the next topics: hobbies, interests, clubs, collections

Lesson 9

Objective: Students will write messages, save to disk, and upload to keypals.

Items needed: computer lab, data disk, word processor, recent e-mail letters received

1. Students will compose a message about sports.
   A. Topics might include information about
      1. school sports
      2. professional sports
      3. general Interest in sports
      4. community sports

2. Students will upload message to keypal.

3. Copy of message will be placed in folder.

4. Messages from keypal will be discussed and information shared with entire class.

Lesson 10

Objective: Students will write messages, save to disk, and upload to keypals.

Items needed: computer lab, data disk, word processor, recent e-mail messages received

1. Students will compose a message about favorite food items.
   A. Topics might include information about
      1. family recipes
      2. traditional foods at holidays
      3. food items that the students know how to prepare
      4. prices of food items
      5. typical daily meals in the home
      6. favorite/least favorite foods and why
      7. favorite/least favorite smells in the kitchen

2. Students will upload message to keypal.

3. Copy of message will be placed in folder.

4. Messages from keypal will be discussed and information shared with entire class.

Lesson 11

Objective: Students will write messages, save to disk, and upload to keypals.

Items needed: computer lab, data disk, word processor, recent e-mail messages

1. Students will compose a message about favorite types of entertainment.
   A. Topics might include information about
      1. favorite/least favorite movies and why
      2. favorite/least favorite TV shows and why
      3. favorite activities during free time
      4. favorite/least favorite reading material and why
      5. favorite/least favorite music, including singers and groups
      6. hobbies
      7. collections

2. Students will upload message to keypal.

3. Copy of message will be placed in folder.

4. Messages from keypal will be discussed and information shared with entire class.

Lesson 12

Objective: Students will prepare posters that represents the life of their keypal and their country.

Items needed: poster boards, glue, tape, markers, magazines, variety of items that could be used on posters

1. Working in groups, the students will prepare a poster that will represent the daily life of their keypal.

2. Items to be included:
   A. Sports
   B. Reading materials
   C. Favorite foods
   D. Family members
   E. Hobbies/interests
   F. Jobs/chores
   G. Physical description
   H. Picture drawn on computer from earlier lesson
   I. Etc.

3. Students should be encouraged to display their best work to produce a poster that will describe their new friend.

4. Sharing time to allow all students to observe and learn from the posters prepared by all students.

5. Posters should be placed around the room or in the hallway.

6. Students should be reminded that the poster counts 20% of the grade on this project.

Lesson 13

Objective: Student evaluation of Project Linking.

Items needed: computer lab, word processor, disks

1. Students will compose an essay, using the word processor, evaluating their learning experience during this project.

2. Students, in this essay, will discuss advantages and disadvantages of this project.

3. Students will also give examples of how they feel the project should be changed or improved.

4. Students will review objectives of this project and evaluate the extend of their achievement of the goals and objectives of this project.

5. Students will be reminded that the essay counts at 25% of project grade.

6. After all the elements of the grade sheet have been completed by the students and evaluated by the teacher, the grade sheets should be returned to students and a final discussion about the overall learning from this project should take place.

Teacher Evaluation of Project

1. Close cooperation between teachers is needed in order to make the project successful.

2. Teachers should share the evaluation written by their students with the cooperating teacher to make any necessary changes and improvements in project.

3. Flexibility should be stressed in all activities as many hindrances may be encountered by the teachers.

4. Any problems in this project should be noted by the teachers and plans made to solve any problems before the next school year.

Back Up Plan

1. Because of the great distance involved between cooperating schools, a back up plan should be developed.
   A. Use postal mail system
   B. Use teacher's personal computers to send student projects
   C. Use e-mail address of another teacher or friend who can help out if the need arises.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR KEYPAL

1. What is the landscape like in your country?
2. What is the weather like in the different seasons?
3. How big is the town or city in which you live?
4. How many people are there in your city or town; state or country?
5. How big is your school and how many students are in each class or grade level?
6. How many pupils are in this class that we are communicating with?
7. What subjects do you study?
8. Do you like your school? What are its good points/bad points?
9. How is your school run?
10. Is your school a public or private school? From where does its funding come?
11. What foreign languages are offered at your school?
12. Do you have to pay anything to go to school?
13. What are you going to do after you have graduated from school?
14. How many years do you have before you graduate from school?
15. Are you politically active or interested in politics?
16. What is the political system like in your country?
17. Is there much race discrimination in your country?
18. Do you think that your government is doing a good job governing your country?
19. Is environmental protection important to you and/or your country?
20. What is the common political view among young people in your country?
21. Do youths where you live have much to say when it comes to decisions made by the local school district? The local government? Your state and/or country?
22. Is drug abuse a big problem among the youth?
23. Are there drug problems inside as well as outside of school?
24. What does your school do with drug offenders?
25. Is there much violence and crime in your school? in your city?
26. Is there much pollution in your country? What is being done about it?

27. When asked about your country, what symbols or pictures or animals, etc. comes to mind?
28. What is the best thing about your country?
29. What are the young people in your town or city doing in their leisure time?
30. What activities can the youth in your area do in their spare time?
31. Have you ever been to my state/country/city?
32. In what countries have you traveled?
33. What are your hobbies?
34. What are the advantages/disadvantages of living in your country?
35. What kind of music is most popular in your country right now? What singer? What group? What music do you listen to the most? Your all time favorite song and singer? How much does a tape or CD cost?
36. What are your favorite TV programs? Tell about them.
37. What kind of movies can you see at the cinema these days? How much does it cost to see a movie?
38. What is the average wage per hour in your country?
39. What do you do on the various holidays? Any special traditions or food?
40. Are there any shopping malls where you live? Tell about how you shop.
41. What do you do at parties?
42. At what age can you vote? Drive a car? Buy alcohol?
43. Describe what a typical date is like in your country.
44. Describe what a typical day in your life is like. What time do you get up? Go to school? Come home? Eat meals? Go to bed?
45. Tell about sports in your school? City? Country? What is your favorite?
46. Do you play any sports? Describe your participation.
47. How big a problem is AIDS in your country?
48. How do people feel about premarital sex in your country?
49. What discipline measures are used in your school? Can you be expelled from school because of bad conduct?
50. What is the one thing about you that makes you "unique"?

TELECOMMUNICATIONS TERMS

* **Analog signal**--the electronic signal with continuous variation, such as the sounds of a voice or music. Analog signals are the signals sent over telephone lines.

* **Baud rate**--refers to the rate at which data is transmitted over a telephone line. It is the rate of characters transmitted per second. The higher the number (2400, 9600) the faster the modem will work.

* **Bit (or binary digit)**--either a 0 or a 1. This is the most basic unit of data that can be recognized and processed by a computer. A 1 means that there is an electrical impulse and a 0 means the absence of an electrical impulse.

* **Digital signal**--the electronic signal that is used by computers. This electronic signal is only OFF or ON (called a 1 and 0). The computer can only use these signals.

* **Download**--the process of receiving data on your computer from another computer.

* **Electronic mail (e-mail)**--using computer, software, modem and telephone lines to send messages from one computer to another computer.

* **Log off (or hang up)**--the act of disconnecting from another computer.

* **Log on**--the act of connecting to another computer.

* **Modem**--the hardware unit which allows a computer to transmit or receive data over a telephone line. The modem acts as a translator for the computer. The modem may be external or internal to the computer.

* **Off-line**--means that the modem is disconnected from another computer.

* **On-line**--means that the modem is connected with, or "on the line" with, another computer.

* **Telecommunications software**--the computer program that allows your computer to transmit and receive messages over a telephone line.

* **Telecommunications**--the transmission of signals from one computer to another computer over long distances, using a modem and telephone lines, microwaves, and/or satellites.

* **Upload**--to transfer data from your computer to another computer.

When a computer sends a signal to another computer, the modem translates the digital signal of the comuter, turning the electrical 1's and 0's to audible analog noises that can be sent along telephone lines. This signal is received on the other end by the other computer and then its modem must turn the analog signal back into a digital signal so that computer can now handle the message.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

1. Keep effective communication as one of your overall goals.

2. Be concise. Organize your thoughts before you start typing your message.

3. Never forget that a human being is receiving your message on the other end.

4. Ask for clarification before jumping to conclusions. Perhaps seemingly outrageous message was meant to be funny or to convey a completely different idea.

5. Do not set e-mail when angry or upset. Never send a message that you would regret reading in a room full of people.

6. For the text of the message, keep your line lengths to less than 60 characters. Shorter lines are easier for the eye to follow.

7. Use uppercase sparingly because it is more difficult to read and is needed for emphasis. Many readers consider capital letters the electronic equivalent of SHOUTING.

8. Do not use profanity or vulgar language.

9. If you are attempting sarcasm or other humor, clearly indicate so. Without face-to-face communications, your joke may be viewed as a criticism. A common convention is to place a "smiley" face icon at the end of non-serious passages. Tilt your head to the left to view the following example :)

10. Use descriptive titles on the "Subject:" line so that messages are easier to file and retrieve.

11. When responding to a question, give some indication as to the content of the original question so the reader will understand that the answer is in response to the original question.

SYMBOLICALLY SPEAKING

"Talking" with someone using e-mail with a computer can be a bit awkward. There is no voice or gesture to help get a point across. So people have developed their own language to compensate for the lack of face-to-face interaction.

A common convention is to place a "smiley face" at the end of a non-serious sentence or paragraph. Tilt your head to the left to view the following examples:

:)	**Smile**
:D	**Laughing**
:*)	**Kiss**
0:)	**Angel**
=:)	**Punk rocker**
:(	**Frown**
;)	**Winking**
:')	**Crying**
{}	**Hug**
}:)	**Devil**

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Moscow School 429

Moscow School Number 429 is in the northeast part of Moscow. This district of Moscow is referred to as Izmailovo. The school was built in 1935 which makes it one of the oldest schools in Moscow. We have an elementary, middle, and high school together in one building. Children begin school in the 1st grade and graduate after the 11th grade.

The school has four floors. The Elementary School is located on the second floor. The Middle and High School occupy the first, third, and fourth floors. In spite of the large building, the school has only 16 Middle and High School classrooms and seven Elementary classrooms. Therefore, the students have to begin their studies at different times. The Elementary as well as grades seven through eleven begin classes at 8:15 am. They finish their classes:

-Elementary School at 12:30 PM
-Grades 7-9 at 2 PM
-High School has many additional classes, so the students finish classes anywhere from 3 - 4 PM, depending on their schedule.

Students come to our school from various districts in Moscow, especially those in High School. The Elementary students live in the neighborhood, but in the Middle and High School levels students may travel from distant parts of Moscow. In Elementary School students have a free lunch provided for them. In Middle and High School only some students have lunch at school. The others prefer to bring their own lunch or wait until they go home to eat.

In Russia, different schools specialize in different subjects. For example the various specialized subject areas may be: literature & history, or math & physics, or music & world arts, etc. Our school is specialized in math and science (biology and chemistry). Students in grades 8 through 11 intensively study these subjects. They must take all subjects, such as literature and history, but they take additional classes in math and science. After finishing school the majority of the students enter highly technical colleges, universities, or institutes.